
The Italian city of Venice has been put on a flood alert after warnings the sea around it could rise to its highest level in thirty years. A number of streets including the central tourist district are already under water. Our Rome correspondent Duncan Kennedy reports:

In the past few hours the famous Piazza San Marco, or Saint Mark's Square, has already gone under around eighty centimetres of water. **Surrounding** streets have also been **affected** with some **residents cut off in** their homes.

But the Venice **Tidal Centre** says that levels could go much higher. It says the sea is **due to** rise to one meter sixty above its normal level - the highest since 1979.

Venice is built on hundreds of islands and often **experiences high water** at this time of the year. The worst incident was in 1966 when the city was **submerged by** nearly two meters of water amid **catastrophic** flooding throughout Italy.

Duncan Kennedy, BBC News, Rome

Vocabulary and definitions

Surrounding	that are around/close by
affected	here, harmed, damaged
residents	people who live in a certain place
cut off in	isolated in, unable to leave
Tidal Centre	an institution studying and predicting tides, i.e. the cyclic rises and falls of the sea caused by the attraction of the Moon and Sun (tides occur about every twelve hours)
due to	expected to
experiences	if you experience something, it happens to you, you can feel it
high water	higher than usual levels of water, flooding
submerged by	covered by, gone under (water)
catastrophic	very bad, causing a lot of damage

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7758204.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/12/081201_venice.shtml